

**STATEMENT OF CHAD CALVERT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND MINERALS MANAGEMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND FORESTS, ON S. 2622, TO PROVIDE FOR A LAND EXCHANGE TO BENEFIT THE PECOS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.**

**July 21, 2004**

---

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present the position of the Department of the Interior on S. 2622, a bill to provide for a land exchange at Pecos National Historical Park in New Mexico.

The Department supports this legislation with an amendment. A hearing on a similar bill, S. 2848 was held during the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress. At that time we supported the bill with several amendments. S. 2622 has taken into consideration those amendments as proposed. We do recommend minor changes to clarify financial responsibilities for the appraisals and completion of compliance documents. By making these changes, and clarifying the map, we believe the exchange could be easily accomplished. However, we defer to the U.S. Forest Service with respect to a determination that the lands they would convey are excess to their needs and available to be used as part of the proposed land exchange.

S. 2622 proposes an exchange among the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service and a private landowner. The private landowner would convey 154 acres of land to the National Park Service at Pecos National Historical Park. The U.S. Forest Service would then convey 160 acres of federal land to the private landowner. Because the land already is within the boundary of the park and identified for purchase in the July 1993 Land

Protection Plan, no boundary adjustment would be needed. As part of the exchanges the private landowner would be given an easement to allow access to two existing wells.

The bill also allows for the Secretaries to establish additional terms and conditions on the exchange in order to protect the interest of the federal government.

We understand the U.S. Forest Service parcel proposed for the exchange is undeveloped.

There are no public utilities within one half mile of the parcel and no environmental analysis has been completed on this parcel.

We propose minor changes to the language to ensure that all parties understand that the landowner will assume the cost of the appraisals and associated environmental compliance. The legislation must be clear that neither Secretary is responsible for those costs. The proposed amendment is attached to this testimony.

S. 2622 would continue the expansion of the park that was begun when lands were added to the boundary in 1990, and allow the National Park Service to more adequately and completely serve park visitors and protect park resources. This new bill also reflects the needs and interests of all of the parties to the exchange and should allow completion of the exchange in the most direct manner.

Pecos National Historical Park (NHP) was established in 1965 as Pecos National Monument and was redesignated in 1990. The park includes almost 7,000 acres in three units and tells the story of 12,000 years of human history. This story includes that of the people of the Pecos Pueblo who made their homes at a trading crossroads and the effects

of Spanish colonization from the south and the movement westward along the Santa Fe Trail. In addition, Pecos NHP tells the story of one of the most interesting battles of the Civil War fought in the west, the Battle of Glorieta Pass. It is also home to a 20<sup>th</sup> century ranch that illustrates how important and critical this natural and cultural crossroads is to the history of America.

Of foremost importance in Pecos NHP is the Pecos River, one of only five in New Mexico that is free-flowing year-round. The mosaic of the riparian environment, high elevation forest, grasslands, and meadows sustains valuable and variable wildlife habitats and ecosystems that are prominent features and vital to the park's cultural landscapes.

When the park was redesignated in 1990, new lands were added and the scope and mission of the park were greatly expanded. The Glorieta Unit, divided into two subunits, each containing approximately three hundred acres, preserves sites of the Civil War action at Glorieta Pass. More than half of the land in these two units is privately owned, making public access, preservation of resources, and protection of property rights difficult. The lands proposed for exchange in S. 2622 are in the Canoncito subunit, the westernmost portion of the park.

That concludes my remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Proposed amendment:

Page 6, line 3, strike all after “COSTS.---“ and insert “Before the completion of the exchange under this section, the Secretaries and the landowner shall enter into an agreement that states that the landowner shall pay the cost of the appraisals and associated environmental compliance documents. Additional costs of the exchange will be allocated in the agreement between the Secretaries and the landowner.”.